

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 32816 021236Z

63

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01 AID-05

SS-15 /070 W

----- 082872

R 021131Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6751

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DEA WASHDC

DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 32816

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,PINT,TH,SNAR

SUBJECT: MINITER OF INTERIOR SAMAK'S REMARKS ON THE RTG ANTI-
NARCOTICS EFFORT

1. DURING THE COURSE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S COURTESY CALL ON
MINISTER OF INTERIOR SAMAK SUNTHARAWET DECEMBER 2, LATTER VOLUNTEERED
THE FOLLOWING REMARKS REGARDING THE RTG'S ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS:

2.SAMAK REGRETTEED NOT HAVING BEEN PRESENT FOR THE PRESENTATION
CEREMONY OCTOBER 22 WHEN PRIME MINISTER THANIN FORMALLY RECEIVED
THE FIVE HELICOPTERS DONATED BY THE USG FOR USE IN THE ANTI-
NARCOTICS PROGRAM. HE REITERATED THE GOVERNMENT'S THANKS AND
ASSURED THE AMBASSADOR THAT "WE ARE PREPARED TO DO OUR BEST"
TO STOP THE TRAFFIC. HE ALLUDED TO THE CREATION OF THE NEW
OFFICE BEING ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TO
OVERSEE THE ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM AND URGED THE AMBASSADOR
TO "WATCH THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS NEW OFFICE" ADDING THAT "WE
WILL DO THE JOB OURSELVES."

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 32816 021236Z

3. SAMAK THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY IMPRESSED

WITH THE FILM PRODUCED FOR BRITISH TELEVISION ENTITLED "THE OPIUM WAR LORDS" AND CONFIDED THAT IN A RECENT CABINET MEETING HE HAD CHALLENGED THE THAI MILITARY ABOUT THE UTILITY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THAILAND'S SECURITY NEEDS OF GIVING ANY SORT OF AID AND COMFORT TO BORDER DISSIDENTS JUST FOR THE SAKE OF HAVING THEM AS A BUFFER BETWEEN BURMA AND THAILAND. HE ARGUED THAT THERE WERE NO REAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND THAT ANY HISTORICAL NECESSITY FOR THESE BUFFER GROUPS WHICH MIGHT HAVE EXISTED IN THE PAST HAD LOST ITS VALIDITY. HE IMPLIED THAT THE CABINET DEBATE HAD BEEN INCLUSIVE BUT HE FELT HE HAD SUCCEEDED IN DISCOUNTING THE "BUFFER ARGUMENT" BY FIFTY PERCENT AND THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO ATTACK IT IN THE FUTURE, EVEN THOUGH THE MILITARY HAD BEEN DISPLEASED AT HIS INTERVENTION.

4. BEFORE LEAVING THE SUBJECT OF THE HELICOPTERS, SAMAK TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE REALIZED THAT THESE FIVE WERE TO BE DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTH AND PROMISED HIM THAT THEY WOULD BE.

5. COMMENT: SAMAK IS, WITHOUT DOUBT, THE MOST DYNAMIC MEMBER OF THE THANIN CABINET. GIVEN HIS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED INTENTION OF TAKING FULL CHARGE OF HIS MINISTRY-E.G., THE SWEEPING RE-SHUFFLE OF TOP POLICE LEADERSHIP WHICH HE RECENTLY ORDERED, APPARENTLY WITHOUT PRIOR CLEARANCE WITH THE TAI MILITARY LEADERSHIP--HIS COMMENTS TODAY SHOULD BE GIVEN MORE THAN PASSING NOTICE.

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